

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-22 are currently pending. Claim 19 has been amended by the present amendment. The changes to Claim 19 have been made to correct minor informalities and no new matter has been added. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the amendment to Claim 19 should be entered as it does not raise a new issue requiring further consideration and/or a new search by the Examiner.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,910,896 to Hahn-Carlson (hereinafter “the ‘896 patent”).

Claim 1 is directed to a physical distribution management method, comprising: (1) an image data generation step for generating image data of a document on which a condition for exporting or importing goods is described; (2) an image data storage step for storing the image data generated in the image data generation step to be association with the goods; (3) a document data storage step for storing document data described on the document, the document data to be associated with the goods; (4) an identification data storage step for storing identification data that identifies a party concerned with export or import of the goods among, in addition to a consignor and a consignee, a number of parties concerned with export or import of the goods; and (5) a data output step, when the party concerned specifies data relating to goods, for obtaining stored data of goods to be associated with the corresponding specified data in the stored document data, and for outputting the obtained data. Further, Claim 1 recites that the identification data storage step decides a range of an output enable data to the party concerned based on stored identification data, and the data output step obtains data matching said decided range.

The '896 patent is directed to a computer processing system for tracking a shipment transaction involving a shipper and a carrier. As shown in Figure 1, the '896 patent discloses a central processor 40 that receives transaction information from a data processing device 34 associated with the shipper 20. The transaction information, which is listed in Table 1 of the '896 patent, is maintained by the central processor 40, which allows access to the information by the shipper 20 and the carrier 22. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose generating image data of a document on which a condition for exporting or importing is described, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, as shown in Figure 2, the '896 patent discloses a system that receives purchase order information, processes the purchase order information, generates shipment parameters, sends the shipping parameters to a bill of landing (BOL) rating engine 30, receives a rated BOL, and sends the rated BOL to the shipper access terminal 32. In this regard, Applicants note that the outstanding Office Action asserts that the "rated BOL" disclosed by the '896 patent reads on the image data recited in Claim 1.¹ However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose that the rated BOL is in the form of image data, which is generated and stored, as recited in Claim 1. In particular, Applicants note that the '896 patent specification and claims do not even recite the word "image." Thus, Applicants respectfully request that, if the present rejection is maintained in a subsequent Office Action, the Examiner provide a citation to the '896 patent that specifically refers to "image" data.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose an identification data storage step that decides the range of an output enable data to the party concerned based on stored identification data that identifies a party concerned with import or export, as recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicants note that the claimed "range" limitation is not specifically addressed in the outstanding Office Action.

¹ See page 3 of the Office Action dated January 11, 2005.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose the claimed data output step for obtaining stored data of goods to be associated with the corresponding specified data in the stored document data. Again, Applicants note that the outstanding Office Action fails to specifically address this step.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the '896 patent fails to disclose the image data generation step, the identification data storage step, and the data output step recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2-9) as anticipated by the '896 patent.

Independent Claims 10 and 19-22 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claims 10 (and dependent Claims 11-18) and 19-22 as anticipated by the '896 patent.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 10, and 19-22 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '896 patent.

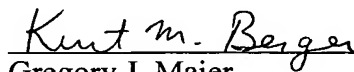
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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